

# CHILD PROTECTION POLICY 2025

## SOUTHEND HIGH SCHOOL FOR BOYS



Date Proposed: 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2025

Policy to be reviewed: Autumn 2026

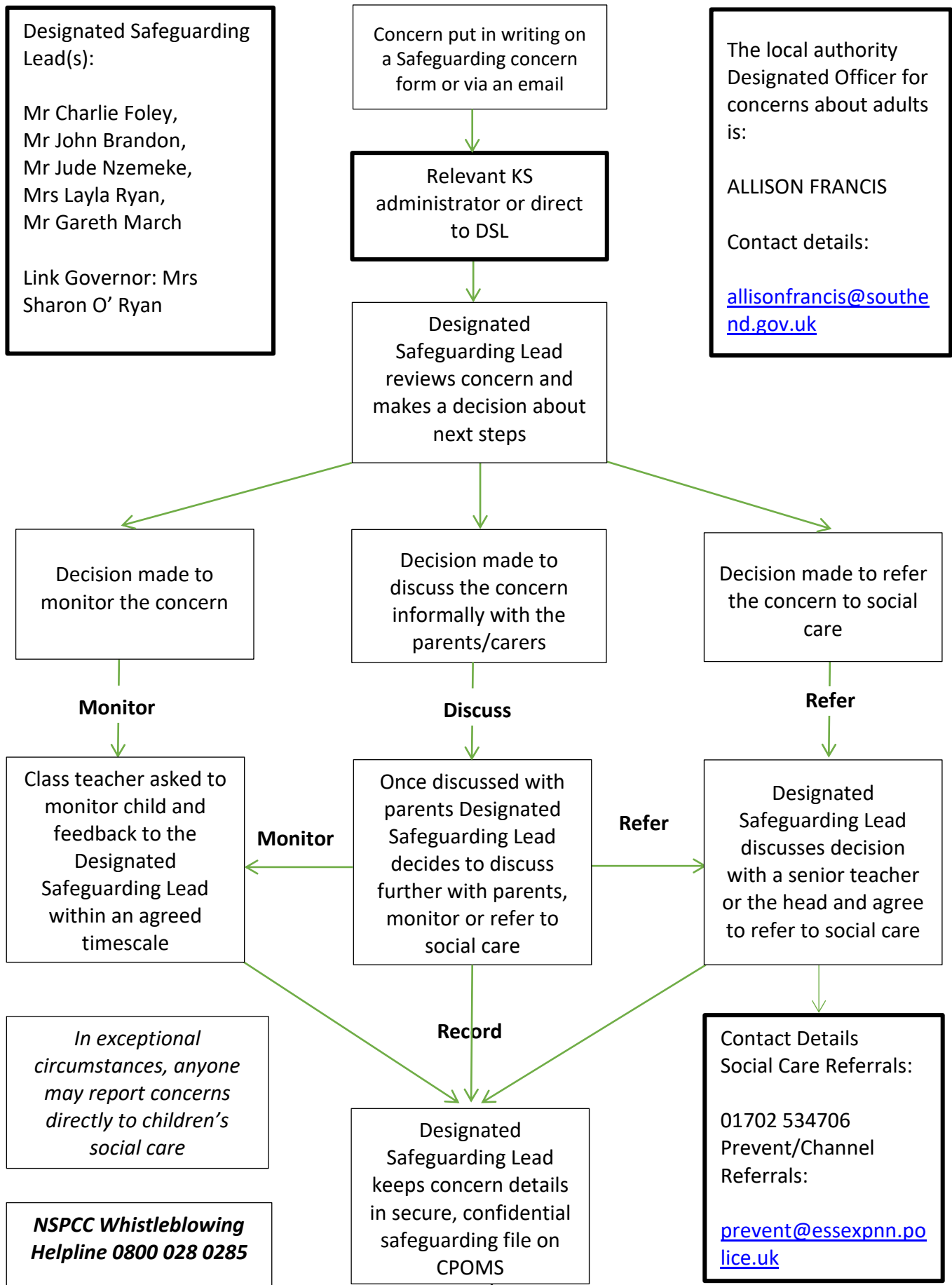
## KEY SAFEGUARDING SCHOOL CONTACTS

Safeguarding Role	Name and Role	School/Education setting contact details
Designated Safeguarding Lead	Charlie Foley – Deputy Headteacher	<a href="mailto:clf@shsb.org.uk">clf@shsb.org.uk</a>
Senior Leader(s) available for contact in the absence of the designated safeguarding lead	Gareth March – Deputy Headteacher	<a href="mailto:gdm@shsb.org.uk">gdm@shsb.org.uk</a>
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead	John Brandon KS3 Director Jude Nzemeke KS4 Director Layla Ryan KS5 Director Gareth March – Deputy Head	<a href="mailto:jlb@shsb.org.uk">jlb@shsb.org.uk</a> <a href="mailto:jcn@shsb.org.uk">jcn@shsb.org.uk</a> <a href="mailto:lir@shsb.org.uk">lir@shsb.org.uk</a> <a href="mailto:gdm@shsb.org.uk">gdm@shsb.org.uk</a>
Attendance Lead/Education Welfare Officer	Jude Nzemeke	<a href="mailto:jcn@shsb.org.uk">jcn@shsb.org.uk</a>
SENCo	Gareth March	<a href="mailto:gdm@shsb.org.uk">gdm@shsb.org.uk</a>
Designated Safeguarding Governor/ Trustee	Sharon O’Ryan	<a href="mailto:sharon.oryan@shsb.org.uk">sharon.oryan@shsb.org.uk</a>
Designated Teacher for Looked After/ previously Looked After Children	Charlie Foley	<a href="mailto:clf@shsb.org.uk">clf@shsb.org.uk</a>
Senior Lead/s for Mental Health and Well-being	Gareth March	<a href="mailto:gdm@shsb.org.uk">gdm@shsb.org.uk</a>
Governor/Trustee for Mental Health and Well-being	Sharon O’Ryan	<a href="mailto:sharon.oryan@shsb.org.uk">sharon.oryan@shsb.org.uk</a>
PHSE/RSE Lead	Kat Iles	<a href="mailto:ksi@shsb.org.uk">ksi@shsb.org.uk</a>
SLT Digital Lead	Lewis Groves	<a href="mailto:ldg@shsb.org.uk">ldg@shsb.org.uk</a>
Data Protection Officer	John Moorhouse	<a href="mailto:dpo@dpoforeducation.co.uk">dpo@dpoforeducation.co.uk</a>

## KEY SAFEGUARDING LOCAL AUTHORITY CONTACTS

Referrals to Local Authority Children’s Social Care	Where schools have concerns for the safety and welfare of a child or young person – a referral should be made through the <a href="#">Southend Children’s Services Portal</a>  Out of Hours: 0345 606 1212
Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)	Where school have concerns about the behaviour of an adult towards a child – they should contact the local authority duty officer (LADO):  Allison Francis (LADO) Email: <a href="mailto:LADO@southend.gov.uk">LADO@southend.gov.uk</a> Tel: 01702 534539
Essex Police	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 999 for emergencies or 101 for non-emergencies</li> <li>● Mandatory reporting of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) via 101</li> <li>● Also see <a href="#">When to call the police – guidance for schools and colleges</a></li> </ul>
Children Missing from Education	<a href="mailto:me@southend.gov.uk">me@southend.gov.uk</a>
Southend Virtual School	<a href="#">Southend Virtual School</a>
School Nursing Team	<a href="mailto:schoolnursing@southend.gov.uk">schoolnursing@southend.gov.uk</a> Tel: 01702 534843

## FLOW CHART FOR RAISING SAFEGUARDING CONCERNS ABOUT A CHILD



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## 1. Introduction

This child protection policy enables Southend High School for Boys to carry out its functions to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in line with key statutory guidance and legislation:

- Department for Education's [statutory guidance](#) publications for schools and local authorities, including:
  - [Working Together to Safeguard Children](#) (2023)
  - [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#) (2025)
  - [Designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children](#) (2018)
  - [The Early Years Foundation Stage Framework](#) (2025)
- [Human Rights Act](#) (1998) and [Equality Act](#) (2010), including the Public Sector Equality Duty
- [Data Protection Act](#) (2018) and [UK GDPR](#)
- [Prevent Duty Guidance](#) (2023) and [The Prevent duty: safeguarding learners vulnerable to radicalisation](#) (2023)
- [Southend, Essex & Thurrock Safeguarding and Children Protection Procedures](#)

Child protection is part of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and is defined for the purpose of this guidance as activity that is undertaken to protect specific children who are suspected to be suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm. This includes harm that occurs inside or outside the home, including online.

As defined in [Working Together to Safeguard Children](#) (2023) safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children as:

- Providing help and support to meet the needs of children as soon as problems emerge
- Protecting children from maltreatment, whether that is within or outside the home, including online
- Preventing the impairment of children's mental and physical health or development
- Ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care, and
- Promoting the upbringing of children with their birth parents, or otherwise their family network<sup>1</sup> through a kinship care arrangement, whenever possible and where this is in the best interests of the children
- Taking action to enable all children to achieve the best outcomes in line with the outcomes set out in the Children's Social Care National Framework

### School Context: Child Protection Policy Statement

Southend High School for Boys maintains an attitude of *"it could happen here"*. We recognise that everyone in the school has a role to play to keep children safe. The best interests of the child are at the heart of our work to: identify and act swiftly on concerns, share information and ensure children feel listened, taken seriously and are safe.

- We ensure that all children are safeguarded while on or off school premises
- We are proactive about anticipating and managing risks that children face in the wider community and online.
- We have a Prevent action plan/risk assessment
- We are part of Operation Encompass.
- We implement any local or national learning where appropriate.
- We recognise the important role we play in multi-agency safeguarding arrangements and contributes to multi-agency working as set out in [Working Together to Safeguard Children](#) (2023).
- We understand our role within local safeguarding arrangements and operates in accordance with the [Southend, Essex & Thurrock Safeguarding and Children Protection Procedures](#), including the local [Threshold document](#).

## 2. Statutory framework

There is government guidance set out in [Working Together \(DfE, 2023\)](#) on how agencies must work in partnership to keep children safe. This guidance places a shared and equal duty on three Safeguarding Partners (the Local Authority, Police and Health) to work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in their area under multi-agency safeguarding arrangements. These arrangements sit under the [Southend Safeguarding Partnership](#).

In Southend, the statutory partners are Southend-on-Sea City Council, Essex Police and one of the three Integrated Care Boards (ICBs) covering the county of Essex; Mid & South Essex ICB.

Section 175 of the [Education Act 2002](#) (*Section 157 for Independent schools*) places a statutory responsibility on the governing body to have policies and procedures in place that safeguard and promote the welfare of children who are pupils of the school.

In Southend, all professionals must work in accordance with the [SET Procedures](#). Our school also works in accordance with the following legislation and guidance (*this is not an exhaustive list*):

[Keeping Children Safe in Education \(KCSIE\) \(DfE, 2024\)](#)

[Working Together to Safeguard Children \(DfE, 2023\)](#)

[Education Act 2002](#)

[Counter-Terrorism and Security Act \(HMG, 2015\)](#)

[Serious Crime Act 2015 \(Home Office, 2015\)](#)

[Children and Social Work Act \(2017\)](#)

[Children Missing Education – Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities \(DfE, 2024\)](#)

[Sexual Offences Act \(2003\)](#)

[Education \(Pupil Registration\) Regulations 2006](#)

[Information Sharing: advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services \(DfE, 2024\)](#)

[Data Protection Act \(2018\)](#)

[What to do if you're worried a child is being abused \(HMG, 2015\)](#)

[Searching, screening and confiscation \(DfE, 2022\)](#)

[Children Act \(1989\)](#)

[Children Act \(2004\)](#)

[Preventing and Tackling Bullying \(DfE, 2017\)](#)

[Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 \(S. 74 - Serious Crime Act 2015\)](#)

[Preventing youth violence and gang involvement \(Home Office, 2015\)](#)

[Criminal Exploitation of children and vulnerable adult - county lines guidance \(Home Office, 2018\)](#)

[Use of reasonable force Advice for headteachers, staff and governing bodies \(DfE July 2013\)](#)

[The Prevent Duty Guidance \(Home Office, 2024\)](#)

[Teaching online safety in schools – Guidance 2023](#)

[School Attendance \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2024](#)

[Working together to improve school attendance \(DfE 2024\)](#)

[SEND Code of Practice \(DfE 2015\)](#)

[Human Rights Act \(1998\)](#)

### **3. Roles and responsibilities - overview**

All adults working with or on behalf of children have a responsibility to protect them and to provide a safe environment in which they can learn and achieve their full potential. However, there are key people within schools and the Local Authority who have specific responsibilities under child protection procedures. The names of those in our school with these specific responsibilities (the designated safeguarding lead and deputy designated safeguarding lead) are shown on page 2 of this document. However, we are clear that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and that everyone who comes into contact with children has a role to play.

#### **The governing body**

The governing body ensures that the policies, procedures and training in our school are effective and comply with the law at all times. It ensures that all required policies relating to safeguarding are in place, that the child protection policy reflects statutory and local guidance and is reviewed at least annually.

The governor for safeguarding arrangements is named on the front cover of this document. This governor takes strategic responsibility at governing body level for safeguarding arrangements in our school. The governing body ensures there is a named Designated Safeguarding Lead and at least one Deputy Safeguarding Lead in place (also named on the front cover).

The governing body ensures the school contributes to inter-agency working, in line with statutory and local guidance. It ensures that information is shared and stored appropriately and in accordance with statutory requirements.

The governing body ensures that all adults in our school who work with children undergo safeguarding and child protection training at induction as appropriate and that it is regularly updated. All staff members receive regular safeguarding and child protection updates, at least annually, to provide them with the relevant skills and knowledge to keep our children safe.

The governing body ensures our pupils are taught about safeguarding (including online safety) through teaching and learning opportunities as part of a broad and balanced curriculum. We work in accordance with government regulations which make the subjects of Relationships and Health Education (for primary age pupils) and Relationships, Sex & Health Education (for secondary age pupils) mandatory.

The governing body and school leadership team are responsible for ensuring the school follows recruitment procedures that help to deter, reject or identify people who might abuse children. It adheres to statutory responsibilities to check adults working with children and has recruitment and selection procedures in place (see the school's 'Safer Recruitment' policy for further information). It ensures that volunteers are appropriately supervised in school.

#### **The Headteacher**

The [Teachers' Standards 2012](#) (updated 2021) state that teachers (which includes headteachers) should safeguard children's wellbeing and maintain public trust in the teaching profession as part of their professional duties. The Headteacher works in accordance with all statutory requirements for safeguarding and is responsible for ensuring that safeguarding policies and procedures adopted by the governing body are followed by all staff.

#### **The Designated Safeguarding Lead (and Deputy / Deputies)**

The Designated Safeguarding Lead in school has ultimate lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection (including online safety and understanding the filtering and monitoring systems and processes in place). Their role includes managing child protection referrals, working with other agencies, ensuring all staff are appropriately trained

and raising awareness of all safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures. They ensure that everyone in school (including temporary staff, volunteers and contractors) is aware of these procedures and that they are followed at all times. They act as a source of advice and support for other staff (on child protection matters) and ensure that timely referrals to Southend Children’s Single Point of Contact Team (C-SPOC) are made in accordance with current [SET Procedures](#). They work with the local authority and other agencies as required and ensure that information is shared appropriately.

The Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads are trained to the same standard as the Designated Safeguarding Lead. If for any reason the designated safeguarding lead is unavailable, the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads will act in their absence.

### **All school staff**

All adults in the school have a role to keep children safe by:

- Providing safe environments, with secure access, where children can learn and develop
- Acting in the best interests of children to protect them on and offline
- Identifying children who are at risk of harm or have been harmed, or are in need of additional help to keep safe
- Taking swift, timely and appropriate action to safeguard children who need extra help or who may be suffering, or likely to suffer harm
- Adhering to safe recruitment processes to make sure all adults in the school have the appropriate vetting checks in place
- Clearly following managing allegations processes to address any concerns (including low level concerns) about an adult’s behaviour towards a child
- Understanding the broader aspects of safeguarding in the context of care and education such as behaviour, Special Educational Needs, attendance and educational visits.

## **4. Types of abuse**

[Keeping Children Safe in Education \(KCSIE\) \(DfE, 2024\)](#) describes abuse in the following way:

*“Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. Harm can include ill treatment that is not physical as well as the impact of witnessing ill treatment of others. This can be particularly relevant, for example, in relation to the impact on children of all forms of domestic abuse, including where they see, hear or experience its effects. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others. Abuse can take place wholly online, or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse. Children may be abused by an adult or adults or by another child or children.”*

Keeping Children Safe in Education refers to five categories of abuse:

- Physical
- Emotional
- Sexual
- Neglect
- Exploitation

Safeguarding action may be needed to protect children from a range of risks. Further information about indicators of abuse and neglect as well as safeguarding risks noted above are located in [Keeping Children Safe in Education \(2025\)](#). These include the following risks, and include abuse perpetrated by other children, as well as by adults:

- any concerns that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, neglect (or Acts of Omission)
- child on child abuse
- absence from school
- bullying, including cyber/online bullying and prejudice-based bullying, anti-social behaviour, Hate Crime, discriminatory, racist, disability and homophobic or transphobic abuse
- gender-based violence/violence against women and girls
- sexual harassment, online sexual abuse, and sexual violence between children. Including abusive messaging and share sexual imagery
- radicalisation and/or extremist behaviour
- child sexual exploitation and child criminal exploitation, including county lines, Modern Slavery.
- risks linked to using technology and social media, including online bullying; the risks of being groomed online for exploitation or radicalisation; and risks of accessing and generating inappropriate content, for example youth produced sexual imagery
- abuse within intimate personal relationships between children (sometimes known as ‘teenage relationship’ abuse)
- upskirting
- substance misuse – drugs and/or alcohol
- gang activity and serious violence, particularly affecting young males who have been excluded, have experienced trauma and have been involved in offending
- domestic abuse
- modern slavery
- forced marriage, marriage/civil partnership under the age of 18, Female Genital Mutilation and so-called ‘honour-based’ abuse
- children with Perplexing Presentations (PP) in whom illness is fabricated or induced (FII)
- homelessness
- child abduction
- community safety issues
- Adultification

This list correlates with the key priorities outlined in The Southend Safeguarding Children Partnership Strategy 2024/2027 that can be found here: [Southend Safeguarding Children Partnership – One Page Strategy Summary 2024-27 | Safeguarding Southend Partnership](#). Further information about abuse and support as collated by the Southend Safeguarding Partnership can be found here: [Information for Children | Safeguarding Southend Partnership](#).

### **Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) and Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)**

Both CCE and CSE are forms of abuse that occur where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance in power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into taking part in criminal or sexual activity. It may involve an exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator and/or through violence or the threat of violence. CCE and CSE can affect children, both male and female and can include children who have been moved (commonly referred to as trafficking) for the purpose of exploitation.

Some specific forms of CCE can include children being forced or manipulated into transporting drugs or money through county lines, working in cannabis factories, shoplifting or pickpocketing. They can also be forced or manipulated into committing vehicle crime or threatening/committing serious violence to others.

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) is a form of child abuse, which can happen to boys and girls from any background or community. It may occur over time or be a one-off occurrence. In Southend, the definition of [Child Sexual Exploitation \(CSE\) from the Department of Education \(DfE, 2017\)](#) has been adopted:

*"Child Sexual Exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs when an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology".*

It is understood that a significant number of children who are victims of CSE go missing from home, care and education at some point. Our school is alert to the signs and indicators of a child becoming at risk of, or subject to, CSE and will take appropriate action to respond to any concerns. The designated safeguarding lead will lead on these issues and work with other agencies as appropriate.

### **Children who are absent from education**

All children, regardless of their age, ability, aptitude and any special education needs they may have, are entitled to a full-time education. Our school recognises that a child missing education is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect and will follow the school procedures for unauthorised absence and for children missing education. It is also recognised that, when not in school, children may be vulnerable to or exposed to other risks, so we work with parents and other partners to keep children in school whenever possible.

Parents should always inform us of the reason for any absence. Where contact is not made, a referral may be made to another appropriate agency (Missing Education and Child Employment Service, Social Care or Police). Parents are required to provide at least two emergency contact numbers to the school, to enable us to communicate with someone if we need to.

Our school complies with [Children missing education \(DfE, August 2024\)](#) and [Southend on Sea Borough Council Early Help and Family Support Children Missing Education Guidance \(November 2023\)](#).

Our school must inform the Local Authority of any pupil who has been absent for a continuous period of 10 days or more without a good reason, and the school has satisfied all avenues of enquiry and is unsuccessful tracing the pupil. We work in accordance with the Southend Protocol for children who go missing during the school day, and our own schools Attendance Policy, to ensure that there is an appropriate response to children who go missing.

Our school also complies with the regulations regarding [School Attendance \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2024](#) and Southend's guidance <http://www.southendlearningnetwork.co.uk/Services/4834>

Our school notifies the Elective Home Education Team via secure email to [ehe@southend.gov.uk](mailto:ehe@southend.gov.uk) at the earliest opportunity and, when relevant, immediately provides a copy of the parents written notification to home educate and the date they came off roll.

### **Contextual safeguarding**

Safeguarding incidents and behaviours can be associated with factors outside our school. All staff are aware of contextual safeguarding and the fact they should consider whether wider environmental factors present in a child's life are a threat to their safety and / or welfare. To this end, we will consider relevant information when assessing any risk to a child and share it with other agencies to support better understanding of a child and their family.

## **Domestic abuse**

Domestic abuse can encompass a wide range of behaviours and may be a single incident or a pattern of incidents. That abuse can be, but is not limited to, psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional. Children can be victims of domestic abuse. They may see, hear, or experience the effects of abuse at home and/or suffer domestic abuse in their own intimate relationships (teenage relationship abuse). All of which can have a detrimental and long-term impact on their health, well-being, development, and ability to learn. Our school recognises that exposure to domestic abuse can have a serious, long-term emotional and psychological impact on children. We work with other key partners and will share relevant information where there are concerns that domestic abuse may be an issue for a child or family or be placing a child at risk of harm.

## **So-called ‘honour-based violence’ (including Female Genital Mutilation and forced marriage)**

*Female Genital Mutilation* (FGM) comprises all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to female genital organs. It is illegal in the UK and a form of child abuse.

As of October 2015, the [Serious Crime Act 2015 \(Home Office, 2015\)](#) introduced a duty on teachers (and other professionals) to notify the police of known cases of female genital mutilation where it appears to have been carried out on a girl under the age of 18. Our school will operate in accordance with the statutory requirements relating to this issue, and in line with local safeguarding procedures.

A *forced marriage* is one entered into without the full consent of one or both parties. It is where violence, threats or other forms of coercion is used and is a crime. Our staff understand how to report concerns where this may be an issue.

## **Mental health**

Our staff are aware that mental health problems can, in some cases, be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation. We understand that, where children have suffered abuse or other potentially traumatic adverse childhood experiences, this can have a lasting impact throughout childhood, adolescence and into adulthood. Where we have concerns this may impact on mental health, we will seek advice and work with other agencies as appropriate to support a child and ensure they receive the help they need.

Positive mental health is the concern of the whole community and we recognise that schools play a key part in this. Our school aims to develop the emotional wellbeing and resilience of all pupils and staff, as well as provide specific support for those with additional needs. We understand that there are risk factors which increase someone’s vulnerability and protective factors that can promote or strengthen resiliency. The more risk factors present in an individual’s life, the more protective factors or supportive interventions are required to counter-balance and promote further growth of resilience.

It is vital that we work in partnership with parents to support the well-being of our pupils. Parents should share any concerns about the well-being of their child with school, so appropriate support and interventions can be identified and implemented.

## Online safety

We recognise that our children are growing up in an increasingly complex world, living their lives on and offline. This presents many positive and exciting opportunities, but we recognise it also presents challenges and risks. Any pupil can be vulnerable online, and their vulnerability can fluctuate depending on their age, developmental stage and personal circumstance. We want to equip our pupils with the knowledge needed to make the best use of the internet and technology in a safe, considered and respectful way, so they are able to reap the benefits of the online world.

The range of online risks could be categorised as:

**content:** being exposed to illegal, inappropriate, or harmful content, for example: pornography, fake news, racism, misogyny, self-harm, suicide, anti-Semitism, radicalisation, and extremism.

**contact:** being subjected to harmful online interaction with other users; for example: peer to peer pressure, commercial advertising and adults posing as children or young adults with the intention to groom or exploit them for sexual, criminal, financial or other purposes.

**conduct:** online behaviour that increases the likelihood of, or causes, harm; for example, making, sending and receiving explicit images (e.g. consensual and nonconsensual sharing of nudes and semi-nudes and/or pornography, sharing other explicit images and online bullying, and

**commerce:** risks such as online gambling, inappropriate advertising, phishing and or financial scams. If you feel your pupils, students or staff are at risk, please report it to the Anti-Phishing Working Group

All staff in our school are aware of the risks to children online and we seek to help children keep themselves safe online in a range of ways - further information about our approach to online safety is available in our Acceptable Use Policies for staff & students.

## Child-on-child abuse

All staff working in or on behalf of the school/education setting maintain an attitude of *'it could happen here'* – this is especially important when considering child-on-child abuse. Even if there are no reports it does not mean it is not happening.

If staff have any concerns regarding child-on-child abuse, they should speak to the designated safeguarding lead or their deputy

The school/education setting recognises that children may abuse their peers physically, sexually, and emotionally. There is a zero-tolerance approach to child-on-child abuse; abuse is abuse and this will not be tolerated or passed off as 'banter', 'just having a laugh', 'boys being boys' or 'part of growing up' as this can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviours and an unsafe environment for children.

The setting will take child-on-child abuse as seriously as abuse perpetrated by an adult and address it through the same processes as any safeguarding issue. We will respond to all reports and concerns, including those that have happened outside of the school and online. In addition, we also recognise that children who abuse others and any other child affected by child-on-child abuse are also likely to have considerable welfare and safeguarding issues themselves.

## What is child-on-child abuse?

[Keeping Children Safe in Education](#) (2025) defines child-on-child abuse as most likely to include but not limited to:

- bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice based and discriminatory bullying):
  - abuse within intimate personal relationships between children (sometimes known as ‘teenage relationship abuse’)
  - physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling or otherwise causing physical harm (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and /or encourages physical abuse)
  - sexual violence, such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and /or encourages sexual violence)
  - sexual harassment, such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes, and online sexual harassment, which may be standalone or part of a broader pattern of abuse
  - causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent, such as forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with a third party
  - consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nude images and or videos
  - upskirting<sup>2</sup>, which typically involves taking a picture under a person’s clothing without their permission, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress, or alarm
  - initiating/hazing type violence and rituals (this could include activities involving harassment, abuse or humiliation used as a way of initiating a person into a group and may also include an online element)

It can also include causing someone to engage in extremist or radicalising behaviour

Child-on-child abuse exists on a continuum and different forms of abuse may overlap

- It can affect any child/young person of any age and sex and can occur between two children or through a group of children abusing a single child or group of children
- Sometimes vulnerable children are targeted. For example:
  - those living with domestic abuse or with intra-familial abuse in their histories
  - young people in care
  - those who have experienced bereavement through the loss of a parent, sibling, or friend
  - black and minority ethnic children are under identified as victims but are over identified as perpetrators
  - there is recognition it is more likely that girls will be victims and boys are likely to be perpetrators. However, both girls and boys can experience child-on-child abuse, but they are likely to experience it differently e.g. girls being sexually touched/assaulted or boys being subject to homophobic taunts/initiation/hazing (rituals and other activities involving harassment, abuse or humiliation used as a way of initiating a person into a group)
  - evidence also shows that children with disabilities, and lesbian, gay, bisexual, or gender questioning children are at greater risk
- It is influenced by the nature of the environments in which children and young people spend their time - home, school/education settings, peer group, online and community - and is built upon notions of power and consent. Power imbalances related to gender, social status within a group, intellectual ability, economic wealth, social marginalisation etc, can all be used to exert power over a peer
- Child-on-child abuse involves someone who abuses a ‘vulnerability’ or power imbalance to harm another and has the opportunity or is in an environment where this is possible
- While perpetrators of child-on-child abuse pose a risk to others, they are often victims of abuse themselves

### **Preventing child-on-child abuse**

There is a whole school/education setting approach to preventing child-on-child abuse, including child-on-child sexual violence and sexual harassment; this forms part of the whole school/education setting approach to safeguarding. The school setting will seek to minimise the risk of child-on-child abuse by ensuring an approach that prepares learners for life in modern Britain. The establishment has a clear set of values and standards which are upheld and demonstrated throughout all aspects of school life.

The school provides a safe environment, promotes a culture of positive standards of behaviour, takes steps to address inappropriate behaviour, has effective systems in place where children can confidently raise concerns knowing they will be taken seriously and provides safeguarding through the curriculum via relationships education/relationships and sex education, online safety, and other curriculum opportunities. This may include targeted work with children identified as vulnerable or being at risk and developing risk assessment and targeted work with those identified as being a potential risk to others.

We use lessons and assemblies to help children understand, in an age-appropriate way, what abuse is and we encourage them to tell a trusted adult if someone is behaving in a way that makes them feel uncomfortable. Our school understands the different gender issues that can be prevalent when dealing with child-on-child abuse. We will never make a child feel ashamed for reporting abuse, nor that they are creating a problem by doing so.

All staff understand the importance of challenging inappropriate behaviours between peers that are abusive in nature. Downplaying certain behaviours will not be tolerated or passed off. Staff will maintain an attitude of '*it could happen here*' and all inappropriate behaviour will be addressed.

The setting deals with a wide continuum of children's behaviour on a day-to-day basis and most cases will be dealt with via school-based processes. These are outlined in the following policies:

- Southend High School for Boys' behaviour policy, including bullying/ online bullying and prejudice-based bullying and school/education setting screening, searching, and confiscating powers and how they will be used safely, and appropriately, including police strip searches
- Online safety policy and other associated issues, including sharing nudes and semi-nudes and extremist material
- Attendance policy
- PSHE curriculum

### **Systems for children to report abuse**

Even if there are no reports, all staff understand it does not mean it is not happening; it may be the case that it is not being reported. We recognise that children may not find it easy to tell staff about the abuse, that certain children may have additional barriers to telling someone and children can show signs or act in ways they hope adults will notice or react to. In some cases, victims may make indirect reports via a friend or staff may overhear conversations. All staff recognise the indicators and signs of child-on-child abuse and know how to identify it.

If staff have any concerns regarding child-on-child abuse, they should speak to the designated safeguarding lead or deputy

## Action on concerns

Child-on-Child abuse may be a one-off serious incident or an accumulation of incidents. Staff may be able to easily identify some behaviour/s as abusive however in some circumstances it may be less clear. Reports of sexual violence and harassment are likely to be complex and require difficult professional decisions to be made, often quickly and under pressure. In all cases the initial response to a report is very important. Members of staff will take the concerns seriously and reassure the child that they will be supported and kept safe, regardless of how long it has taken them to come forward. If possible, reports should be managed with two members of staff present (preferably one being the designated safeguarding lead or a deputy), however this might not be possible in all cases. The victim will not be given the impression they are creating a problem or made to feel ashamed for making a report or their experience minimised. Abuse which has occurred online or outside of the school/education setting will be treated just as seriously as that which has occurred within the education environment.

Staff must follow *Responding to concerns about a child's welfare* and discuss the concerns and seek advice from the designated safeguarding lead.

When an allegation is made by a pupil/student against another pupil/student, members of staff should consider if the issues raised indicate that the child and/or alleged perpetrator may have low level, emerging needs, complex/serious needs, or child protection concerns and follow the process outlined in *Responding to concerns about a child's welfare*.

Considerations for cases where child-on-child abuse is a factor include:

- what are the wishes of victims in terms of how they want to proceed?
- what is the nature, extent and context of the behaviour including verbal, physical, sexual (including sharing of nudes/semi-nudes) and/or online abuse? Was there coercion, physical aggression, bullying, bribery or attempts to ensure secrecy? What was the time, location, duration, and frequency? Is the incident a one off or a sustained pattern of abuse? (Remember there may be other forms of abuse in addition to what has been reported) Were other children and /or adults involved? Has a crime been committed and/or have any harmful sexual behaviours been displayed?
- what is the child's age, development, capacity to understand and make decisions (including anything that might have had an impact on this e.g., coercion), and family and social circumstances? What is the nature of the relationship between the children involved? Are they in a current or previous intimate personal relationship, do they live in the same household or setting, attend the same school/education setting, classes, or transport?
- what are the relative chronological and developmental ages of the children? Does the victim or perpetrator have a disability or learning difficulty? Are there any differentials in power, social standing, or authority?
- is the behaviour age appropriate or not? Does it involve inappropriate sexual knowledge or motivation?
- are there any risks to the child victim or alleged perpetrator themselves and others e.g., other children in school/education setting, adult students, school/education setting staff, in the child's household (particularly siblings or other children related to the household), extended family, peer group or wider social network? Are there any links to child sexual exploitation, child criminal exploitation or gang related activity?

Immediate consideration should be given to how best to support and protect the victim and alleged perpetrator and any other children involved/impacted. Where the report involves rape and assault by penetration, the alleged perpetrator must be removed from any classes they share with the victim. There must also be careful consideration on how best to keep the victim and alleged perpetrator apart on school/education setting premises (including any before or after school activities) and on transport to and from the setting.

For all other reports of sexual violence and sexual harassment and forms of child-on-child abuse, the proximity of the victim and alleged perpetrator and considerations regarding shared classes, school/education setting's premises and transport should be considered immediately.

All decisions will be made in the best interests of the children involved and should not be perceived to be a judgement on the guilt of the alleged perpetrator. In all cases, the initial report should be carefully evaluated on a case-by-case basis with the designated safeguarding lead taking a leading role and using their professional judgement, supported by other agencies, such as local authority children's social care and the police as required. The designated safeguarding lead will refer to relevant assessment tools and guidance as appropriate, such as:

- [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#) (2025) part five
- [Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people](#)
- [Searching, screening and confiscation at school](#)
- [Behaviour in schools](#)
- [School suspensions and permanent exclusion](#)
- [Stop it Now Sexual Behaviours Traffic Light Tool](#)
- [Southend Threshold Document](#)
- [Southend, Essex & Thurrock Safeguarding and Children Protection Procedures](#)
- [When to call the police – guidance for schools and colleges](#)

When appropriate the designated safeguarding lead may seek further advice from local or national safeguarding contacts as outlined in [Key safeguarding contacts](#).

Whenever there is an allegation of abuse, including concerns about sexual harassment and violence, made against a child, the designated safeguarding lead and other appropriate staff will draw together separate risk and needs assessments and action plans to support the victim and the alleged perpetrator. These will consider:

- the victim, especially their protection and support
- whether there have been other victims
- the alleged perpetrator/s
- all the other children (and if appropriate adult students and staff) at the school/education setting, especially any actions that are needed to protect them from the perpetrator/s, or from future harms
- the time and location of the incident and any action required to make the location safer
- when information can be disclosed to staff and others, including the alleged perpetrator and parents/carers

Whenever local authority children's social care and/or the police are involved, the school/education setting will work in collaboration to ensure the best possible support and protection is provided for both the victim and the alleged perpetrator.

All reports of Child-on-Child abuse (including sexual harassment and/or sexual violence) will be recorded in the child's safeguarding/child protection file. This will include all decision making, risk and needs assessment and plans.

Where appropriate incidents may be managed internally (low level needs), via early help (emerging needs) or through local authority children's social care (complex/serious needs or child protection concerns); reports to the police will be run in parallel with children's social care as outlined in the [Southend, Essex & Thurrock Safeguarding and Children Protection Procedures](#).

All risk and needs assessment and action plans whether internal or multi-agency will be reviewed and updated on a regular basis. If things do not improve or deteriorate the situation should be reconsidered.

Where the victim or alleged perpetrator transfers to another school, the designated safeguarding lead will ensure the new provider will be made aware of any on-going support needs (and will discuss this with the victim and where appropriate their parents, as to the most suitable way of doing this) as well as transferring the safeguarding/child protection file. In the case of the alleged perpetrator, where appropriate, this will also include potential risks to other children and staff.

Any suspicion or allegations that a child has been sexually abused or is likely to sexually abuse another child (or adult) or where there are concerns about any other form of abuse, a referral must be made immediately to local authority children's social care and where appropriate, the police

## **Prevention of radicalisation**

As of July 2015, the [Counter-Terrorism and Security Act \(HMG, 2015\)](#) placed a new duty on schools and other education providers. Under section 26 of the Act, schools are required, in the exercise of their functions, to have “due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism”. This duty is known as the Prevent duty. It requires schools to:

- teach a broad and balanced curriculum which promotes spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils and prepares them for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life and must promote community cohesion
- be safe spaces in which children / young people can understand and discuss sensitive topics, including terrorism and the extremist ideas that are part of terrorist ideology, and learn how to challenge these ideas
- be mindful of their existing duties to forbid political indoctrination and secure a balanced presentation of political issues

**CHANNEL** is a national programme which focuses on providing support at an early stage to people identified as vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism.

Our school operates in accordance with local procedures for **PREVENT** and with other agencies, sharing information and concerns as appropriate. Where we have concerns about extremism or radicalisation, we will seek advice from appropriate agencies and, if necessary, refer to Social Care and / or the Channel Panel.

## **Serious violence**

All staff are aware of the risk factors and indicators which may signal that children are at risk from or involved with serious violent crime. These may include increased absence from school, a change in friendships or relationships with older individuals or groups, a significant decline in performance, signs of self-harm or a significant change in well-being, or signs of assault or unexplained injuries. Unexplained gifts or new possessions could also indicate that a child has been approached by, or is involved with, individuals associated with criminal networks or gangs.

## **5. Children potentially at risk of greater harm**

We recognise that some children may potentially be at risk of greater harm and require additional help and support. These may be children with a Child in Need or Child Protection Plan, those in Care or previously in Care or those requiring mental health support. We work with Social Care and other appropriate agencies to ensure there is a joined-up approach to planning for these children and that they receive the right help at the right time.

Our school understands that children with special educational needs (SEN) and / or disabilities can face additional safeguarding challenges. Barriers can exist when recognising abuse and neglect in this group of children. These can include:

- Assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child’s disability, without further exploration
- That they may be more prone to peer group isolation than others
- The potential to be disproportionately impacted by things like bullying, without outwardly showing signs
- Communication difficulties in overcoming these barriers

## 6. School staff safeguarding roles and responsibilities

All staff and governors/trustees are equipped with the knowledge and skills to keep children safe as set out in KCSIE (2025) by receiving:

- safeguarding training at induction
- appropriate safeguarding training appropriate to their roles and responsibilities which is regularly updated
- online safety and for children to be taught about safeguarding, including in relation to online safety
- attendance information, with dedicated attendance training for any staff with a specified attendance function in their role, including administrative, pastoral, or family support staff, and senior leaders
- data protection information (including recording protocols) and cyber security, relevant to the roles staff undertake
- safer recruitment appropriate training for those involved with the recruitment and employment of staff to work with children
- support and training for those involved with managing allegations against staff

All staff and governors know and understand the:

- Child Protection policy
- Behaviour and Preventing Bullying policy
- staff and volunteer behaviour (Code of Conduct) policy
- whistleblowing policy
- Managing Allegations policy
- Attendance policy including dealing with persistent absences or children missing from education
- The safeguarding response to child-on-child abuse
- The role and names of the designated safeguarding lead, their deputy/ies, the designated teacher for looked after children, the senior mental health lead,

Staff and governors receive a paper/electronic copy of, read and sign to say that they have received, read, and understood as follows:

- Those who work directly with children at least Part one of [Keeping Children Safe in Education: for school and college staff](#) and Annex B: Further information (2025)
- School/education setting leaders, including governors/trustees/proprietors and designated safeguarding leads/deputies all of [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#) (2025)
- Staff who do not work with children directly at least [Keeping Children Safe in Education: for school and college staff \(part 1\)](#) (2025) or Annex A Safeguarding information for school and education setting staff (a condensed version of part 1)
- Code of Conduct policy for staff
- Code of conduct policy for governors/trustees

All staff receive regular safeguarding and child protection updates, including online safety (for example, via email, e-bulletins, staff meetings) as required, and at least annually, to continue to provide them with relevant skills and knowledge to safeguard children effectively.

Staff build by their expertise by undertaking safeguarding training and through managing safeguarding concerns on a daily basis. Staff contribute to and shape safeguarding arrangements and the child protection policy.

### Staff induction

Staff, governors and trustees at Southend High School for Boys will have an induction appropriate to their roles in line with any advice from local safeguarding partners. New staff will also receive information about systems within the school which support safeguarding, including online safety and copies of policies All staff undergo safeguarding and child protection training, including online safety which, amongst other things, includes an understanding of the expectations, applicable roles and responsibilities in relation to filtering and monitoring) at induction.

## 7. School Leadership Accountability Responsibilities

### Governance

As outlined in [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#) (2025) Chapter 2 'The Management of Safeguarding' the governing body or trustees exercise strategic leadership oversight of all aspects of safeguarding in the school, in line with statutory requirements. This is a standing item at all governing body/trustee meetings and recorded in minutes. To support this a safeguarding audit is undertaken every two years to ensure the effectiveness of safeguarding policies and processes.

The senior governor/trust board level member who takes leadership responsibility for the establishment follow local arrangements is Charlie Foley

The governing body or trustees ensure:

- compliance to the Equality Act (2010) and the Human Rights Act (1998)
- that the school adheres to the Data Protection Act 2018, and the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)
- appropriate policies and procedures in place in order for appropriate action to be taken in a timely manner to safeguard and promote children's welfare in line with Section 157/175 of the Education Act
- an appropriate senior member of staff, from the school leadership team, is appointed to the role of designated safeguarding lead.
- a clear job description for the designated safeguarding lead is in place which clearly sets out their lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection (including online safety and understanding the filtering and monitoring systems processes).
- the designated safeguarding lead has the appropriate status and authority within the school to carry out the significant level of responsibility and duties of the post,
- allocate sufficient time, funding, training, resources, and support to the designated safeguarding lead to carry out the role effectively.
- additional deputy designated safeguarding leads are appointed as required
- the designated safeguarding lead including any deputies are trained to undertake their role as set out in local requirements. be trained to the same standard as the designated safeguarding lead.
- those involved in safeguarding work understand and applying the [Threshold document](#), and the [Southend, Essex & Thurrock Safeguarding and Children Protection Procedures](#) and follow the local information sharing protocols to supply information as requested by the Southend Safeguarding Children Partnership so that partners can perform their functions to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in their area, including information related to local and national child safeguarding practice reviews.
- staff and governors have the right safeguarding training to undertake their roles effectively. This includes recognising and responding to child-on-child abuse, mental health concerns, risks associated with non-school attendance, any additional safeguarding barriers for children with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND) or certain medical or health conditions, protected characteristics and the use of 'reasonable force.'
- children are taught about how to keep themselves and others safe, including when online.
- safer recruitment procedures are robust, including the hire of any school premises or facilities and the use of any alternative provision provider
- rigorous procedures in place to report and manage any allegation raised about an adult's behaviour towards a child
- a designated teacher works with local authorities to promote the educational achievement of registered pupils who are looked after
- the school works effectively with the local authority in line with the DfE guidance on Elective Home Education

## **Headteacher Responsibilities**

The headteacher adheres to the Headteacher Standards (2020) to ensure the protection and safety of pupils and staff through effective approaches to safeguarding, as part of the duty of care. The headteacher ensures that the policies and procedures, adopted by their governing body/trustees are understood, and followed by all staff. This includes working with the designated safeguarding lead, their deputy, and other senior leaders, to ensure the effectiveness of safeguarding within the school and ensuring that educational outcomes of children who have or have had a social worker are promoted.

## **The Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputy Designated Lead**

*Training:* The designated safeguarding lead and deputies have the appropriate training, knowledge and skills required to carry out their role. This includes how to identify, understand and respond to specific needs that can increase the vulnerability of children, as well as specific harms that can put children at risk, and the processes, procedures and responsibilities of other agencies, particularly local authority children's social care. This training is updated at least every two years. The designated safeguarding lead and deputies also undertake Prevent awareness training. Whilst the activities of the designated safeguarding lead is at times delegated to a trained deputy, the ultimate lead responsibility for child protection remains with the designated safeguarding lead, this lead responsibility is not delegated.

The designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) is available during school or hours for staff in the school to discuss any safeguarding concerns.

*Responsibilities:* The designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) takes lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection (including online safety and understanding the filtering and monitoring systems and processes in place). These are specifically outlined in KCSIE (2025), and primarily include:

- providing advice and support to other staff on child welfare, safeguarding and child protection matters
- responding to and act on any concerns or disclosures in a timely manner, triaging these against the local authority thresholds using all of the available information and refer or seek advice as necessary
- ensuring child protection records are appropriately maintained and updated, including detail about decision making and further actions or outcomes and the threshold level reached in line with local procedures
- taking part in strategy discussions and inter-agency meetings, and/or supporting other staff to do so, and contributing to the assessment of children and being a key point of contact with the safeguarding partners
- informing the Headteacher of issues, including ongoing section 47 of the Children Act 1989 and police investigations
- being the lead contact when working with the school's leadership team for promoting educational outcomes by knowing the welfare, safeguarding and child protection issues that children in need are experiencing, or have experienced, and identifying the impact that these issues might be having on children's attendance, engagement and achievement at school by:
  - ensuring senior leaders know and have oversight its cohort of children who have or have had a social worker are, understanding their academic progress and attainment, and maintaining a culture of high aspirations for this cohort,
  - supporting teaching staff to provide additional academic support or reasonable adjustments to help children who have or have had a social worker reach their potential, recognising that even when statutory social care intervention has ended, there is still a lasting impact on children's educational outcomes

## **Teachers**

Teachers adhere to the Teachers' Standards (2021) expectation that all teachers manage behaviour effectively to ensure a good and safe educational environment and requires teachers to have a clear understanding of the needs of all pupils.

This includes:

- knowing and understanding and following the school's child protection policy and procedures
- promote educational outcomes of pupils subject to any safeguarding concerns and following any advice such as making reasonable adjustments or implementing any directed actions in a statutory safeguarding plan

## 8. Procedures

Any staff member including supply staff should follow the following procedures if they have any concerns about a child's welfare:

- in an emergency take the action necessary to help the child, for example, call 999 for medical assistance or if a crime needs to be reported
- report your concern to the designated safeguarding lead or their deputy as swiftly as possible and within the hour. This can be via email, or by locating them onsite.
- if the matter is extremely urgent, or you are unsure, speak to the designated safeguarding lead or their deputy as quickly as possible.
- follow the advice of the DSL and remember this information is confidential
- ensure record keeping is up to date and accurate. It should be logged as quickly as possible, on the same day and before the child is due to leave the school premises
- seek support for yourself if you are distressed by contacting Gareth March (senior leader for mental health and wellbeing)

Staff must always **immediately** inform the designated safeguarding lead or their deputy if there are any:

- concerns that a child is presenting signs or symptoms of abuse, exploitation, or neglect, including suspicion that a child is injured, marked, or bruised in a way which is not readily attributable to the normal knocks or scrapes received in play
- searching incidents where there are reasonable grounds to suspect a learner was in possession of a prohibited item or where a search has revealed a safeguarding risk
- behaviour or changes in presentation, including changes in school attendance, which gives rise to suspicions that a child may not be receiving adequate care or may be suffering harm
- hint or disclosure of abuse about or by a child
- concerns that a person(s) who may pose a risk to children is living in a household with children present
- concerns about online abuse including cybercrime, exploitation, harmful sexual behaviour, sharing nudes and semi nudes and/or where any adult appears to be sexually communicating (e.g., email, text, written note or verbally) with a child
- concerns about child-on-child abuse, including sexual violence and harassment
- information which indicates that the child is living with someone who does not have parental responsibility for them (this is known as private fostering)
- concerns that a child is at risk of domestic abuse or so-called 'honour-based' abuse, including forced marriage, marriage, or civil partnership under the age of 18, female genital mutilation (FGM), breast ironing, virginity testing or hymenoplasty
- concerns that a child is at risk of radicalisation, child sexual exploitation or criminal exploitation, including county lines; or that a child or their parent/carer may be a victim of modern slavery (trafficked)

There will also be occasions when you suspect that a child may be at risk, but you have no 'real' evidence. For instance:

- the child may need support with their mental health.
- the child's behaviour, play and or appearance may have changed
- attendance rates at school may have reduced
- the child's ability to concentrate and focus may have altered

These concerns should be raised with the DSL. Do not presume someone else will do or has done it.

It is not the responsibility of the school or its staff to determine the truth of any disclosure or allegation. This is the responsibility of local authority children's social care.

Ensure you record these early concerns by sending a detailed, factual account of your concerns to the relevant key stage admin, who will record it on the school's CPOMs system. If a child or adult does begin to reveal that a child is being harmed, you should follow the advice in the section '*If a child chooses to tell a member of staff about a concern or abuse*'.

### **If a child chooses to tell a member of staff about a concern or abuse**

It takes a lot of courage for a child, parent, carer, or other significant adult to disclose that they are worried or have concerns. They may feel ashamed, the abuser may have threatened what will happen if they tell, they may have lost all trust in adults, or they may believe, or have been told, that the abuse is their own fault. It is important they are reassured that they are being taken seriously, and that they will be supported and kept safe. They should not be made to feel they are creating a problem, blamed or ashamed for making a report. Reports, particularly those about sexual violence and harassment, if possible, should be managed with two members of staff present (preferably one being the designated safeguarding lead or a deputy), however this might not be possible in all cases.

If a child or adult talks to you about any risks to a child's safety or well-being you will need to let them know that you must pass the information on – you are not allowed to keep secrets. The point at which you do this is a matter for professional judgement.

During your conversation with the child (or their parent/carer):

- allow them to speak freely, listen to what is being said without interruption and without asking leading questions
- keep questions to a minimum and of an open nature ('TED questions' tell me, explain, describe) i.e., 'can you tell me what happened?' rather than 'did x hit you?'
- remain calm and do not overreact – the child (or their parent/carer) may stop talking if they feel they are upsetting you
- give reassuring nods or words of comfort – 'I'm so sorry this has happened', 'I want to help', 'This isn't your fault', 'You are doing the right thing in talking to me'
- avoid admonishing the child or adult for not disclosing earlier. Saying 'I do wish you had told me about this when it started' or 'I can't believe what I'm hearing' may be your way of being supportive but they may interpret it that they have done something wrong
- do not be afraid of silences – remember how hard this must be for the child or adult
- under no circumstances ask investigative questions – such as how many times this has happened, whether it happens to siblings too, or what do other family members think about all this
- at an appropriate time tell the child or adult that to help them you must pass the information on
- do not automatically offer any physical touch as comfort; it may be anything but comforting to a child who has been abused
- tell the child or adult what will happen next. The child or adult may agree to go with you to see the designated safeguarding lead. Otherwise let them know that someone will come to see or contact them before the end of the day
- report verbally to the designated safeguarding lead
- write up your conversation as soon as possible and hand it to the designated safeguarding lead
- children should not be asked to write statements about abuse or any concerns that may have happened to them or sign the staff record
- Seek support if you feel distressed. This may be sometime after the disclosure

The Children's Single Point of Contact Request for Service should be used to support a child Protection referral. The Children's Single Point of Contact Request for Service form and guidance is available on the [Southend Safeguarding](#)

[Partnership](#) website and Southend Learning Network. A completed Children's Single Point of Contact Request for Service form contains all the information required for a child protection referral and should be sent to Children's Single Point of Contact (C-SPOC) team. Essential information will include the pupil's name, address, date of birth, family composition, the reason for the referral, whether the child's parents are aware of the referral, the name of person who initially received the disclosure, plus any advice given. This written confirmation must be signed and dated by the referrer.

Any child may benefit from early help. If early help is appropriate, the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy who is responsible for that specific phase) will generally lead on liaising with other agencies and setting up an inter-agency assessment as appropriate. Staff may be required to support other agencies and professionals in an early help assessment, in some cases acting as the lead practitioner. Further guidance on effective assessment of the need for early help can be found in Working Together to Safeguard Children. Any such cases should be kept under constant review and consideration given to a referral to local authority children's social care for assessment for statutory services if the child's situation does not appear to be improving or is getting worse.

The school may also seek advice from Social Care or another appropriate agency about a concern, if we are unsure how to respond to it. Wherever possible, we will share any safeguarding concerns, or an intention to refer a child to Children's Social Care, with parents or carers. However, we will not do so where it is felt that to do so could place a child at greater risk of harm or impede a criminal investigation. If it is necessary for another agency to meet with a child in school, we will always seek to inform parents or carers, unless we are advised not to by that agency. On occasions, it may be necessary to consult with the Children's Single Point of Contact (C-SPOC) team and / or Southend Police for advice on when to share information with parents / carers.

If a member of staff continues to have concerns about a child and feels the situation is not being addressed or does not appear to be improving, all staff understand they should press for re-consideration of the case with the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

If, for any reason, the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or deputies) are not available, this will not delay appropriate action being taken. Safeguarding contact details are displayed in the school to ensure that all staff members have unfettered access to safeguarding support, should it be required. Any individual may refer to Social Care where there is suspected or actual risk of harm to a child.

When new staff, volunteers or regular visitors join our school they are informed of the safeguarding arrangements in place, the name of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (and deputy/deputies) and how to share concerns with them.

### **Role of the designated safeguarding lead and their deputy following identification of concerns**

Whenever the designated safeguarding lead or their deputy receive information regarding concerns about a child, including via police domestic abuse notifications via Operation Encompass they will:

- review information received and assess if any urgent actions are needed, i.e. medical, child's immediate safety
- check what is known about the child when they arrived (or not) at school today, how they are presenting physically and emotionally and if there are any changes in their behaviour
- consider what is already known about the child and their family, including whether any previous concerns have been raised by staff or if they are already known to local authority children's services (targeted early help or social care)
- consider what 'checks' need to be carried out and how best these can be achieved
- inform relevant school staff who have a specific need to know i.e., class/form teacher and relevant support staff
- where appropriate use relevant national, local, and education-based risk identifying, assessment tools and guidance to support the identification of needs and decision making, such as: school records, assessments, and chronologies, including any contextual factors/placed based risks.

- use national guidance and assessment tools e.g. [Stop it now](#) (sexual behaviours), [Contextual safeguarding tools](#), [Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people \(2024\)](#)
- not directly approaching a child or parent/carer about an incident when the school/education setting have received a domestic abuse notification and instead make general enquiries with the child about how they are. If a child initiates a conversation about the incident the guidance outlined in the section '*If a child chooses to tell a member of staff about a concern or abuse*' will be followed
- follow the [Southend, Essex & Thurrock Safeguarding and Child Protection Procedures](#) and using the [Southend Threshold document](#) to support decision making about the child's needs and the appropriate level of support and intervention. Possible options include internal support via school/education setting pastoral systems, early help assessment and referral to statutory services such as local authority children's services
- considering whether the matter should be discussed with the child's parents or carers or whether to do so may put the child at further risk of harm, see Notifying parents
- if unsure about the action to take, including if a child protection referral should be made, seeking advice from local authority children's social care or another appropriate agency
- if the concerns are about radicalisation or violent extremism, contacting the local authority Prevent team for advice and where appropriate making a referral to the police Prevent Team
- where the child has complex needs or where there are child protection concerns, referring as appropriate to Local Authority Children's Services via agreed processes, providing a copy of the early help assessment, action plan and any other relevant assessments
- notify the appropriate Local Authority Children's Services of any private fostering arrangements, to allow the local authority to check the arrangement is suitable and safe for the child. Notifications will contain the information specified in Schedule 1 of The Children (Private Arrangements for Fostering) Regulations 2005 and made in writing
- if a child is at risk of immediate harm, and/or where it is believed a criminal offence has been committed, including sexual violence and harassment, referring to the police. See [NPCC When to call the police; guidance for schools and colleges](#). Safeguarding considerations must take priority and include how screening, searching, and confiscating powers will be used safely, proportionately, and appropriately, including undertaking a police strip search on a child and the requirement for children to have an [appropriate adult](#).; see [Searching, screening and confiscation at school guidance](#) (2022)

*Responding to concern or disclosure.* The designated safeguarding lead reviews all available information and uses this to triage the case and take appropriate action in line with the local authority thresholds. This includes:

- referring cases of suspected abuse and neglect to the local authority children's social care as required and support staff who make referrals to:
  - local authority children's social care
  - the Channel programme where there is a radicalisation concern as required and support staff who make referrals to the Channel programme
  - where a person is dismissed or left due to risk/harm to a child to the Disclosure and Barring Service as required, and
  - where a crime may have been committed to the Police as required. (NPCC - When to call the police should help understand when to consider calling the police and what to expect when working with the police)

*Recording:* The designated safeguarding lead ensure records are a clear and comprehensive summary of the concern, including:

- details of how the concern was followed up and resolved
- a note of any action taken, decisions reached and the outcome, referencing the local authority thresholds
- ensuring that child protection files are kept up to date, stored securely and confidentiality
- keep concerns and referrals in a separate child protection file for each child.
- ensuring a child protection file is transferred to the new school or college as soon as possible, and within 5 days for an in-year transfer or within the first 5 days of the start of a new term, when children leave the school
- ensuring receipt of a child protection file for any pupil new to school subject to statutory safeguarding intervention

### **Notifying parents/carers**

The school/education setting will normally seek to discuss any needs or concerns about a child with their parents or carers. Where an early help assessment would benefit the child and their family the most appropriate member of staff should approach the parent/carer to take this forward. In situations where there are serious needs or child protection concerns the designated safeguarding lead or deputy will contact the parent or carer. However, if the setting believes that notifying parents could increase the risk to the child or exacerbate the problem, then advice will first be sought from local authority children's social care.

### **Pastoral/school-based support (universal support/ low level needs)**

In all cases the school/education setting will consider what support could be offered within the setting via pastoral support processes. Pastoral support will be kept under constant review to ensure that it is effective.

### **Early help support and assessment (emerging needs)**

Where a child is likely to require co-ordinated support from a range of early help services, or where there are concerns for a child's well-being or a child's needs are not clear, not known or not being met, the designated safeguarding lead or their deputy will support the completion of an early help assessment (EHA) and if needed, co-ordinate a team around the family (TAF).

Whenever a child and their family are supported via an early help assessment, the school/education setting will keep this under constant review and should the child's situation appear not to be improving or getting worse, consideration will be given to a referral to local authority children's services.

For more information about the early help assessment process see the [Southend Early Help Framework](#).

### **Referral to local authority children's social care**

Concerns about a child's welfare will be referred to local authority children's social care using the agreed referral process as outlined in the Southend [Threshold document](#). (See appendix 3 for threshold

If at any point there is a risk of immediate serious harm to a child, an immediate referral should be made to local authority children's social care and/or if appropriate, the police. Anybody can make the referral

Where it is believed that there are urgent child protection concerns, the designated safeguarding lead or deputy will make a referral to local authority children's social. Non-urgent cases will be referred via the local authority [Children's Services Portal](#).

In exceptional circumstances, such as in an emergency or a genuine concern that appropriate action hasn't been taken, any staff member can refer their concerns directly to local authority children's social care; however, they should inform the designated safeguarding lead or deputy as soon as possible.

### **Action following referral**

The designated safeguarding lead, their deputy or other appropriate member of staff will:

- where a referral was made by phone, follow up the referral, in writing using the online referral system, within 48 hours and attaching any existing assessment e.g., early help assessment. In all cases the school/education setting will also include information held about any place-based risks (harm outside of the home)
- be aware that local authority children's social care should make a decision within one working day of the referral being made about what course of action they are taking and let the school/education setting know the outcome. If the information is not forthcoming, the designated safeguarding lead or another appropriate member of staff should follow this up
- maintain contact with the allocated social worker and support them or other agencies following any referral
- contribute to any strategy discussion or meetings
- support any Section 47 enquiries or statutory assessments that are carried out
- provide a report for, attend, and contribute to any initial and review Child Protection Conference. This includes sharing any reports with parents/carers and where appropriate, the child
- share the content of this report with the parent/carer and if appropriate the child, prior to the meeting
- attend core group meetings for any child subject to a Child Protection plan or Child in Need meeting for any child subject to a Child in Need plan
- where a child on a Child Protection plan, Child in Need plan or who is Looked After moves from the school/education setting or if there are unexplained absences from school, immediately inform the child's social worker/key worker in local authority children's social care
- if after the referral the child's situation does not appear to be improving the designated safeguarding lead should press for re-consideration to ensure their concerns have been addressed and the child's situation improves.

## 9. Records and information sharing

All concerns, discussions and decisions made, including the rationale for those decisions, should be recorded in writing. This includes instances where referrals were or were not made to another agency, such as local authority children's social care or the Prevent programme etc. If in doubt about recording requirements staff should discuss with the designated safeguarding lead or their deputy.

Records of concerns documentation, referrals and other written safeguarding information are kept in a child protection file for each child and stored separately from each child's education file; this file is 'tagged' to indicate that separate information is held. Child protection files are confidential and stored securely and only made available to relevant individuals.

Records will include:

- a clear and comprehensive summary of the concern.
- details of how the concern was followed up and resolved
- a note of any action taken, decisions reached, the rationale for these, and the outcome, as well as a review of any progress made
- any professional differences of opinion about the safety of a child will also be recorded.

When a child leaves the school, the designated safeguarding lead will ensure a copy of these records will be sent securely as soon as possible (within 5 days for an in-year transfer or within the first 5 days of the start of a new term) to any school or other education setting to which the child transfers and a confirmation of receipt obtained. The child protection file transfer will be separate to the main pupil file. This will allow the new provider to continue supporting the child and have the support in place for when the child arrives. We will obtain evidence that the paperwork has been received by the new school and then destroy any copies held in our school. Where appropriate, the Designated Safeguarding Lead may also make contact with the new educational setting in advance of the child's move there, to enable planning so appropriate support is in place when the child arrives.

Where a pupil joins our school, we will request child protection records from the previous educational establishment (if none are received).

The designated safeguarding lead will also consider if it would be appropriate to share any information with the new education provider in advance of the child leaving e.g. children who have or who have had a social worker and those receiving support through the Channel programme.

The designated safeguarding lead, their deputy/ies and key staff such as special education needs co-ordinators will be informed when a child's safeguarding/child protection file is received.

## 10. Interagency working

It is the responsibility of the Designated Safeguarding Lead to ensure that the school is represented at, and that a report is submitted to, any statutory meeting called for children on the school roll or previously known to them. Where possible and appropriate, any report will be shared in advance with the parent(s) / carer(s). A report will be made available to a Child Protection Conference Chair, 48 working hours in advance of the Conference, and shared with the parents/carers before the day of the Conference. The member of staff attending the meeting will be fully briefed on any issues or concerns the school has and be prepared to contribute to the discussions and, in the case of a Conference, to express a view, at the end of the meeting, as to whether the child(ren) should be made subject to a Child Protection Plan.

If a child is subject to a Care, Child Protection or a Child in Need Plan, the Designated Safeguarding Lead will ensure the child is monitored regarding their school attendance, emotional well-being, academic progress, welfare and presentation. If the school is part of the core group, the Designated Safeguarding Lead will ensure the school is represented, provides appropriate information and contributes to the plan at these meetings. Any concerns about the Child Protection Plan and / or the child's welfare will be discussed and recorded at the core group meeting, unless to do so would place the child at further risk of significant harm. In this case the Designated Safeguarding Lead will inform the child's key worker immediately and then record that they have done so and the actions agreed. If there is an unexplained absence of, or injury to a child subject to a Child Protection Plan, the child's Key Worker must be notified immediately.

## 11. Allegations or concerns about people working with children

All staff members are made aware of the boundaries of appropriate behaviour and conduct. These matters form part of staff induction and are outlined in the Staff Behaviour Policy / Code of Conduct. The school works in accordance with statutory guidance and the [SET Procedures](#) in respect of allegations against an adult working with children (in a paid or voluntary capacity). Section 7 of the current SET procedures provides detailed information regarding this.

The school has processes in place for reporting any concerns about a member of staff (or any adult working with children). Any concerns about the conduct of a member of staff must be referred to the Headteacher (or the Deputy Headteacher in their absence), as they have responsibility for managing employment issues. Where the allegation concerns an agency member of staff, the Headteacher (or Deputy) will liaise with the agency, while following due process.

Where the concern involves the Headteacher, it should be reported direct to the Chair of Governor who will consult with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).

The [SET Procedures](#) require that, where an allegation against a member of staff is received, the Headteacher, senior named person, or the Chair of Governors must inform the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) on **01702 534591** or [safeguardingforchildren@southend.gov.uk](mailto:safeguardingforchildren@southend.gov.uk) within one working day. However, wherever possible, contact with the LADO will be made immediately as they will then advise on how to proceed and whether the matter requires Police involvement. This will include advice on speaking to pupils and parents and HR. The school does not carry out any investigation before speaking to the LADO. The school will manage these procedures alongside the school's disciplinary process, if appropriate, in liaison with the school's HR Advisor.

Staffing matters are confidential, and the school operates within a statutory framework around Data Protection.

## 12. Use of reasonable force

The term 'reasonable force' covers a broad range of actions used by staff that involve a degree of physical contact to control or restrain children. There are circumstances when it is appropriate for staff to use reasonable force to safeguard children and young people, such as guiding a child to safety or breaking up a fight.

**Staff are protected in law** if they use *reasonable, proportionate, and necessary* force to break up a fight or protect someone from harm.

**"Reasonable"** means:

- **Proportionate** to the situation (force used should match the seriousness of the risk);
- **Used as a last resort**, after verbal de-escalation fails or isn't possible;
- **No more than necessary** to achieve the lawful aim (e.g. stopping injury).

Examples of **permitted physical contact** include:

- Holding back a pupil who is attacking someone;
- Separating pupils who are fighting;
- Leading or steering a pupil away from danger (by the arm, shoulder, or similar);
- Physically intervening to stop them running into danger (e.g. into a road).

Staff **must not**:

- Use force as punishment (that would constitute *corporal punishment*, which is illegal);
- Use holds or restraints that restrict breathing, cause pain, or could injure (e.g. neck holds, hitting, or holding joints in extreme positions);
- Use prolonged or unnecessary restraint once the danger has passed.

## 13. Whistleblowing

All members of staff and the wider school community should be able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice and feel confident any concern will be taken seriously by the school leadership team. We have 'whistleblowing' procedures in place, and these are available in the school Whistleblowing Policy. However, for any member of staff who feels unable to raise concerns internally, or where they feel their concerns have not been addressed, they may contact the [NSPCC whistleblowing helpline](#)

on: 0800 028 0285 (line is available from 8:00 AM to 8:00 PM, Monday to Friday) or by email at: [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk).

Parents or others in the wider school community with concerns can contact the NSPCC general helpline on: 0808 800 5000 (24 hour helpline) or email: [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk).

## 14. Training

In line with statutory requirements, the Designated Safeguarding Lead (and deputy/deputies) undertake child protection training specifically for Designated Safeguarding Leads at least every two years. The Headteacher, all staff members and governors receive appropriate child protection training which is regularly updated and in line with advice from the Southend Children's Safeguarding Partnership. In addition, all staff members and other adults working with children in our school receive safeguarding and child protection updates as required, but at least annually, to provide them with relevant skills and knowledge to safeguard children effectively. Records of any child protection training undertaken are kept for all staff and governors.

The school ensures that the Designated Safeguarding Lead (and deputy) also undertakes training in inter-agency working and other matters as appropriate.

## 15. Professional confidentiality

The school/education setting recognises the importance of information sharing between the school/education setting and local agencies to effectively safeguard our learners. The setting operates with regard to HM Government [Information Sharing; Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers](#) (2024), Information Commissioner's Office [A 10 step guide to sharing information to safeguard children](#) (2023) and DDSCP [Information Sharing Guidance for Practitioners](#) (2022).

All staff will be mindful of the seven golden rules to sharing information (See Appendix 3) and [Data Protection Act](#) (2018) and [UK General Data Protection Regulation](#) (UK GDPR) obligations. Staff are aware that the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR do not prevent or limit the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children safe and promoting their welfare, rather, they provide the legal framework under which information can, and in some cases, must be shared.

School staff should be proactive in sharing information as early as possible to help identify, assess, and respond to risks or concerns about the safety and welfare of a child, whether this is when problems are first emerging, or where a child is already known to local authority children's social care.

**If in any doubt about sharing information, staff should speak to the designated safeguarding lead or a deputy, who will seek advice from our Data Protection Officer if needed**

**Fears about sharing information must not be allowed to stand in the way of the need to promote the welfare, and protect the safety, of children**

**All information sharing outside of 'business as usual', should be recorded on the appropriate logs**

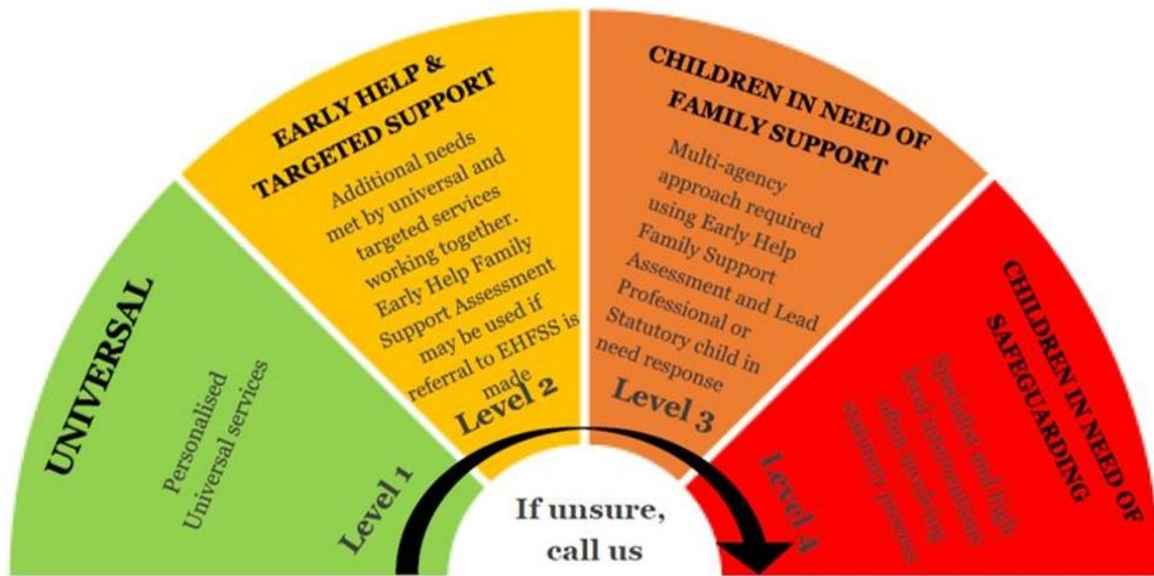
Staff should only discuss concerns with the designated safeguarding lead or deputy (or the most senior person on the premises if they are unavailable), headteacher or chair of governors/trustees (depending on who is the subject of the concern). That person will then decide who else needs to have the information and they will disseminate it on a 'need-to-know' basis.

Where appropriate, consent will be sought to share information. However, where there are safeguarding concerns about a child, information will be shared with the appropriate organisations such as local authority children's social care under alternative, appropriate, lawful basis. In most cases concerns will be discussed with parents and carers prior to the referral taking place unless doing so would increase risk.

## 16. Appendix A: Children's Service Key Contacts

<p>Children's Single Point of Contact (<b>C-SPOC</b>) team <b>Children's Social Care</b>, <b>Southend City Council:</b> Where schools have concerns for the safety and welfare of a child or young person.</p> <p><b>OUT OF OFFICE HOURS:</b> To make URGENT referrals</p>	<p>01702 215007, option 1</p> <p>c-spoc@southend.gov.uk (unsecure)</p> <p>0345 606 1212</p>
<p><b>Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)</b></p>	<p>01702 534591 (Direct)</p> <p>07827990956 (Mobile)</p> <p><a href="mailto:SafeguardingforChildren@southend.gov.uk">SafeguardingforChildren@southend.gov.uk</a></p>

## 17. Appendix B: Southend Windscreen of Need and Levels of Intervention



Nothing is more important than the welfare of a child. Parents and carers have the primary responsibility for their children. However, local authorities, working with partner agencies, have specific duties to safeguard and protect the welfare of all the children and young people in their area and everyone who comes into contact with children and young people has a role to play.

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children can be defined as:

- Protecting children from maltreatment
- Preventing impairment of children’s health or development
- Ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes

Working Together to Safeguard Children sets out a clear expectation that local agencies will work together and collaborate to identify children and young people with additional needs and provide support as soon as a problem emerges. Working Together is a statutory guidance and all practitioners working, or having contact with, children and young people are required to read and understand it so they can meet their legal obligation to keep children safe.

Providing early help is far more effective in promoting the welfare of children – and keeping them safe – than reacting later when any problems, for example neglect, may have become more entrenched. The importance of using a child-centred approach in following the child’s journey is also emphasised. All services which are provided must be based on a clear understanding of the needs and views of the individual child in their family and community context.

Along the continuum of services become increasingly targeted and specialised according to the level of need. Children’s needs are not static, and they may experience different needs – at different points of the continuum – throughout their childhood years.

The continuum of need matrix does not provide an exhaustive list but provides examples that can be used as a tool to assist assessment, planning and decision making when considering the needs of children/young people and their safeguarding needs in particular. Any safeguarding indicators of concern should always be considered alongside any related needs. It should be remembered that some children/young people will have additional vulnerability because of their disability or complex needs and the parental response to the vulnerability of the child must be considered when assessing needs and risks.

Southend on Sea have adopted the Graded Care Profile 2 (GCP2) to help professionals from across the partnership to support families where neglect is a key feature; this forms part of a wider piece of work in addressing childhood neglect. The GCP2 is a tool designed to provide an objective measure of the care of children who are, or maybe suffering from neglect. It is primarily based on the qualitative measure of the commitment shown by parents or carers in meeting their children's developmental, emotional, physical and safety needs. Information is available on the Safeguarding Partnership website

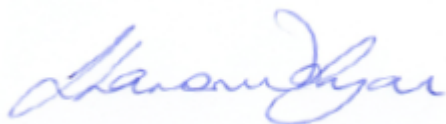
[Southend Safeguarding Partnership](#)

Where there is an urgent and immediate need to protect a child, dial 999 to contact the Police. Otherwise for all other children/young people who may be at risk of significant harm, contact **C-POC** as soon as possible.

**Acknowledgement:**

We acknowledge the Southend On Sea City Council model Child Protection Policy which contributed to the development of this model policy.

**Model Policy Revised: October 2025**



**Signed by Sharon O'Ryan (Chair of Governors)**

**Formally approved by the Full Governing Body on 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2025**